

High School Valedictory
(Prepared for Kathryn Reese, North Augusta, 1934)

There is nothing wrong with our form of Government. The Government founded by such noble men as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and John C. Calhoun will never fall but will forever be a monument to the great and lofty principles of liberty, freedom and righteousness upon which it is based. These great leaders built our Government for the masses and not for a favored few. In Franklin D. Roosevelt, our outstanding President, we have a man who is interested in the masses of the people and who is trying to restore the country and Government to the people to whom it belongs. His problems have been intricate and his struggles have been terrific but he shall yet be successful in wrenching control of the Government from a selfish few and restoring it to the common people. A few shrewd and selfish individuals, by shaky stock manipulations and various other methods of unfair dealings, apparently within the law, have gained control of the wealth of our country, and it behooves each and every citizen to cooperate with our great President in his noble efforts to redistribute wealth and give the forgotten man the opportunity that he desires and deserves. This is a big problem and one that will require intelligent thought and straight forward action to solve.

There are two forces though that have always solved the problems of the world and will solve the problems now confronting our nation, the first is brains. A person with brains always commands the respect of his fellow men and is the type of person capable of solving the paramount problems before us today. A brainy man is not one just born so, although he must have been endowed by nature with at least average capacity, but in most cases he is a man who has developed his talents and his abilities

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through definite channels and training. He has seized every opportunity to enrich his knowledge, secure information and gain experiences. He is the man who has done more than the average in the work in which he is engaged not because of the salary or compensation received but because of his ambition to develop himself to mount the pinnacle of competency and efficiency to render good service. Brains require training and the average person cannot expect to rise very high in life, though his native ability is good, if he does not train his mind. It is constant training that produces efficiency. One should desire to be of service to his country and should consecrate himself to ideals that are for the betterment of the people and should then concentrate on the matters at hand in order to render the public the best service possible. If we trace the lives of the great leaders of the different countries throughout the world, we shall see that it was training that was such an important factor in moulding them into such leaders. It was training that made Napoleon of France the world's greatest General; it was training that prepared Wellington, the English General, for the task of conquering the great Napoleon; it was training that produced the great Demosthenes of Greece, the Caesars and Ciceros of Rome and the George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Woodrow Wilson of America. What we need today is people with trained minds, people with brains, to solve the problems before us. We appreciate the training our teachers have given us in this splendid school, but from now on the world will be our school, experience will be our teacher and life will be our lesson. This is called a graduation exercise but it is really a commencement in life for us, and even though we may forget the books we have studied and some of the things they contain, it is my sincere hope that we shall not forget the taste for study, the habit of mental application and intellectual discipline--all of which are

so essential if we are to become people with well trained minds, people with brains.

The second great force, and the one that runs hand in hand with brains in solving the problems of the world, is character. No attribute or quality is to be placed above character. To say that a person has character is the highest tribute that can be paid to a human being. Character underlies the whole edifice of civilization as a rock supports the house or as old Atlas held up the earth. It is that look in a woman's eye "which makes brutes men, and men divine". It does more to make thrones stable, to make business safe and peace among ^{nations} ~~overs~~ than any other one thing. It is the secret power of statesmen and the patent of nobility in a gentleman. A man may possess the keen mind of a Statesman or the strong form of an athlete, but if he hath not character ~~his~~ is doomed to fail. A man may be endowed with wonderful natural ability or may even have greatness thrust upon him, but if he hath not character the seeds of success are not in him.

Without character the loveliest woman is more hateful than a witch, the wisest man more ignorant than a fool, and the most scrupulous religionist more dangerous than the devil ^{himself}. Without character those who bathe remain filthy, the noble are vulgar, the famous are infamous and those in high station are contemptible. Character is the charm of the young and the strength of the old; men have fought for it and women have died for it. It is the thing that keeps us clean and enables us to face our mirrors without closing our eyes. One may lose his position, his money, his home, his health and even his life, ~~yet~~ yet if he hold fast to character, he is the winner. We should all be imbued with high ideals of life and we should appreciate the fact that men are worth more than money, souls are worth more than gold, culture is to be placed

above riches, character above diamonds and honor is to be preferred to houses and land. A poet once wrote: "For when the one great scorer comes to write against your name, he writes not that you won or lost, but how you played the game". In developing our characters we might do well to follow old Seneca who at the end of each day's work used to ask himself at night three questions: What infirmity have I mastered today? What passion have I opposed? What virtue have I acquired.

Some one has said there are three kinds of people in the world, the 'wills', the 'won'ts' and the 'can'ts'. The 'wills' accomplish everything, the 'won'ts' oppose everything and the 'can'ts' fail in everything so the North Augusta High School graduating class of 1934 hereby resolves to be 'wills' and we hope that this resolution on our part will lead to definite accomplishment by each member of this graduating class, and that we shall be able to cope with the baffling problems that will confront us.